



A periodic report from THE NATIONAL DIGITAL LIBRARY PROGRAM THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

New technologies foster new opportunities. Technologies have always served as catalysts, causing one historical period to recede and the next to advance. We are in such a period now. The technological developments of the past 20 years are facilitating the growth of an electronic community of unimagined reach and richness.

The library is embracing this online world through its National Digital Library Program. We provide over the Internet more than 27 million records, including bibliographic data; summaries and status of federal legislation; copyright registration records; and foreign law abstracts and citations.

Our online offerings include legislative, historical, and cultural collections. (The story on pages 2-3 describes our digitization of America's most beloved and significant "treasures" in the Library's collections.) In 1995, we will have made available 351 pamphlets by and about African-Americans from the period 1880-1920; 25,000 turn-

FROM
THE
LIBRARIAN
☺

of-the-century photographs from the Detroit Publishing Company; 1,300 of Carl Van Vechten's portrait photographs of celebrities taken between 1932 and 1964; and 167 books and pamphlets from the National American Woman Suffrage Association.

We are working on future contributions. Appropriated resources, philanthropic funds, and institutional collaborations (see page 4) will enable the Library to digitize 5 million items by the year 2000.

We are fortunate indeed to be at this place at this time to share in and contribute to the emerging electronic community's National Digital Library some of the world's richest intellectual properties.

Through these periodic summary reports we hope to bring you highlights of the Program's exciting work. Let us know from time to time how we are doing.

—James H. Billington
The Librarian of Congress

Library replaces mainframe computer to speed user access

The electronic nerve center of the Library of Congress (LC) recently underwent a major upgrade—an improvement that will speed access to the massive amount of data stored on Library central processing units (CPUs).

Library hard drives hold one-half of one terabyte, or 500 billion bytes of data. (To put that in perspective: a PC hard drive holds about 200 million bytes of data; one byte is the equivalent of one character or number.) Technical personnel saw symptoms of computer transactions about to overwhelm two older mainframes stor-

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SERVICES

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Library's treasures going digital

Americana dominates initial choices

From the 108 million items in the Library of Congress, curators and other subject experts are selecting a number of collections to become part of the first phase of the National Digital Library Program.

In a staff forum in April 1995, the Librarian of Congress, James H. Billington, sketched out criteria for collections and items to be digitized. As a first principle, the Library will select "items

HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS

of the broadest possible interest, and second, items unique to the Library of Congress." Initially, the Library does not seek to

be comprehensive, but rather will draw on its rich resources to demonstrate the potential of the digital library. Digitized materials will represent key aspects of the Library's collections. Over the coming months, the Library will convert a small group of extremely rare and historically significant items known as its "treasures," with American materials dominant. These rarities are a crystallization of the Library's immense holdings and will be part of a rotating exhibition in the restored Jefferson Building in 1997. This exhibition, on display through the bicentennial year of the Library in 2000, is supported by the Xerox Foundation. Digitizing the treasures will allow those who cannot visit the exhibition to study these materials online, while for those able to view them directly, the digitized images will serve as both an enticement to visit and an inspiring reminder of the exhibit.

—James H.
Billington,
The Librarian
of Congress

The greater part of the Library of Congress's contribution to the National Digital Library will consist of special collections or unique items relating to the American experience. Beginning with the early years of the Republic through the turbulent 1970s, the digital materials encompass a diversity of formats and subjects. Anchoring the digital collections will be the papers of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln as well as those of Ulysses S. Grant. A cluster of materials already online documents the period of the American Civil War, including more than 1,000 Civil War photographs. The Alfred Whital Stern Collection, containing material by and about Lincoln and the Civil War era, will also be made available.

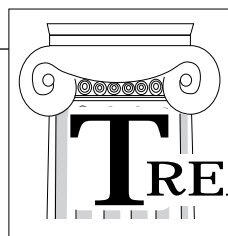
Several large collections to be digitized cover decades and even centuries, tracing the evolution of architecture through drawings, blueprints, and photographs from the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record; the development of American music in broadside songs and sheet music; and aspects of theater arts in stage posters, playbills, and program books of the Federal Theatre Project. Other valuable materials include the papers and photographs of Margaret Mead, paper prints and fragments of lost films from the turn of the century, political cartoons, social-issue posters, and maps from all periods of North American history. Together the digitized images will form a multifaceted library of unique materials of aesthetic, cultural, historical, political, and social importance. Later phases of conversion will augment these selections.

**For additional information,
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NOTE: See the next page for a list of the "treasures" already digitized and those being digitized.

THE NATIONAL
DIGITAL LIBRARY
PROGRAM—
A LIBRARY FOR ALL
AMERICANS

The collections of the Library of Congress belong to the American people. We have a responsibility to make the enormous riches of this institution as accessible as possible to as many people as possible.



SELECTED TREASURES

Treasures already online

Thomas Jefferson, Rough Draft of the Declaration of Independence, 1776

Benjamin Henry Latrobe, Elevation for west front of the Capitol, 1811

Abraham Lincoln, First and second drafts of the Gettysburg Address, 1863

Treasures being digitized

James Madison, U.S. Constitution, printed by Dunlap & Clay Poole, with Madison headnote, 1787

George Washington's Commission as Commander-in-Chief, with John Hancock's signature, 1775

George Washington, Inaugural Address, 1789

Pierre Charles L'Enfant, Manuscript plan for Washington, D.C., 1791

Francis Scott Key, Manuscript copy of "The Star-Spangled Banner," 1840

Abraham Lincoln, Preliminary draft of the Emancipation Proclamation, 1862

Ulysses S. Grant, Commission as Lt. General, signed by Abraham Lincoln, 1864

Walt Whitman, Early draft of "O Captain! My Captain!" 1860s

Alexander Graham Bell, Notebook sketch for telephone, 1876

Justice Felix Frankfurter, Draft opinion regarding *Brown vs. Board of Education*, 1955.

Speed *from page 1*

ing the Library's data. Mainframes were averaging about 12 million internal transactions and 4 million external transactions each month. When measured in millions of instructions per second (MIPS), use of the Library's CPUs had doubled over 5 years. Mainframes do all the Library's computing—LOCIS (Library of Congress Information System); Bill Digest and other files for Congressional Research Service; COPICS (Copyright Office Publication and Interactive Cataloging System); and many internal administrative systems.

Six months ago, LC technicians heard of a used mainframe ready for trade-in by the U.S. Postal Service. Its resale price was \$4.5 million; the Library negotiated a purchase for the trade-in value: \$3 million.

A big problem was timing the replacement of the two mainframes with the newer, faster one. The Library's Information Technology Services and Amdahl Federal Service Corp. of Reston, Va., planned carefully to achieve the exchange without users being aware of it. Two days were needed to do the work. To ensure that lost Saturday computer time was minimal, the operation began at 9:30 p.m. on Saturday during the Memorial Day weekend, giving engineers until early Tuesday to complete the task. Detailed maps of cable locations and port connections ensured efficient procedures and protection of the data, which were never in any danger throughout the process. Even with a 4-hour setback—a critical part failed, and engineers had to obtain and install another—the new mainframe was in place and all its 2-plus miles of cable were connected by noon Monday—18 hours ahead of schedule.

Can users tell the heart of the Library beats faster? Yes. Response time has dropped 68 percent.

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VISIT THOMAS

In the spirit of Thomas Jefferson, THOMAS provides extensive legislative information on the Internet.

Uniform
Resource
Locator:
[http://
thomas.loc.gov](http://thomas.loc.gov)

Institutions join in National Digital Library Federation agreement

The Library of Congress, the Commission on Preservation and Access, and 14 other research libraries and archives have signed the National Digital Library Federation agreement. The agreement symbolizes the cooperative effort of the institutions to collect and make digitized materials accessible to all those who need and want them—students, scholars, citizens.

Recognizing “the important leadership role that the Library of Congress has played in raising as a national issue the need for such a national digital library,” the participants agreed to establish a collaborative management structure, develop a coordinated approach to fund-raising, and formulate selection guidelines that will “ensure conformance to the general theme of U.S. heritage and culture.”

The Library of Congress is proud to be a member of the Federation and to continue its leadership role in building a collection of digitized materials that will bring unique materials reflecting America’s heritage and culture to all.

—James H. Billington
The Librarian of Congress

In addition to the Library of Congress, those institutions signing the agreement on May 1 are: Columbia University, Cornell University, Emory University, Harvard University, National Archives and Records Administration, New York Public Library, Pennsylvania State University, Princeton University, Stanford University, University of California at Berkeley, University of Michigan, University of Southern California, University of Tennessee, and Yale University.

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THE NATIONAL DIGITAL LIBRARY PROGRAM

Reports will be published about 12 times a year, using gift funds. Comments and suggestions are welcome.

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